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# *Voices from the Field*

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IMMANUEL

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CANADIAN COUNCIL  
LAYMEN'S MISSIONARY MOVEMENT  
CONFEDERATION LIFE BUILDING  
TORONTO, CANADA

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# **VOICES FROM THE FIELD**

**ADDRESS BY**

**JOHN R. MOTT, F.R.G.S., LL.D.,**

**AT LAYMEN'S LUNCHEON  
IN CONNECTION WITH  
CENTENARY CELEBRATION**

**OF THE**

**WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY  
SOCIETY,**

**LONDON, FEBRUARY, 1912**

**FOLLOWING HEARTY WORDS OF CONGRATULATION**

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**EMMANUEL**

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD.

It has been my lot during the last five years to visit all the continents of the world and many of the islands. My cruise has taken me to nearly all the battlefields of the Christian Church. Wherever I have gone I have heard voices, voices that come back to me this noon hour, voices appealing to this Society as to every other Society in the world, voices summoning us in the one direction, and that is in the direction of a far greater advance among the non-Christian nations. You ask me what were those voices that I heard as I cruised up and down the non-Christian nations, as I threaded my way among the densely-crowded Presidencies and Native States and Provinces and great regions of highly organized and unorganized society, in and out among these dark zones of heathenism—what were those voices? I heard the

## VOICE OF THE EXPERT

I refer to the missionaries--call upon the Home Church to make an unprecedented advance in the near future. There are a little over 20,000 foreign missionaries. I know, personally, some thousands of them. I have sat at their feet; I have been in their homes; I have had fellowship with them; I have discussed for long hours the problems that press upon their brains and consciences; I have come to repose great confidence in their judgment. They are the most remarkable body of workers to be found in any profession in the world. It ought to be so. They were chosen from all Christendom. They are a number comparatively small; they were chosen by the most exacting processes; they are face to face with the facts; they have staked their lives on the proposi-

tion; they are not in the habit of being self-deceived; they have no object in deceiving others. As I talked with them they presented one unbroken appeal to the leaders, both of the lay and the clerical workers of the Home Church, to stir themselves to bring forward the forces of the Church for an unprecedented advance in the future. Now, if here and there a missionary had told that to me, it would have been worthy of our consideration, but when I tell you that every one, without hesitation, without mental reservation, was unanimous in this appeal, the fact should be cumulative. You and I honor experts in every other department, we defer our judgment, we say we must give heed. I tremble for the Church if it shows that lack of imagination, and that lack of responsiveness, to turn back in the face of an appeal like this from those we have learned to trust.

### THE CRY OF NEED.

Then I heard the deep undertone of the need of our brothers and sisters in the non-Christian nations and races. Did I say I heard it? I hear it. It comes to me at times to haunt me in the watches of the night. Sometimes I have been so selfish as to wish that I might be able to forget what I have been obliged to see and hear, and wish that my nervous organization might have been spared the strain, as I placed my life, not professionally, but sympathetically, I hope, alongside of these, fighting their losing battle. And then I have been ashamed of myself and determined that if God would keep vivid those memories I would seek to share them, to share those voices, with men of purity of heart and heroic spirit wherever I could find them. I say

purity of heart; men who see God and, therefore, will honor God's movement. Believe me they have every danger that we know anything about in a country like this or America. They have temptations the like of which we know not, and the temptations they have in common with us they have in greater degree and capacity, incredibly greater.

### SOCIAL PROBLEMS, OURS AND THEIRS.

We talk about our social problems in this country; where have we got a problem as any home-country that will touch the social problem of caste? Say what you may about the sin and shame in the darkest part of this country, where do you find women in the condition in which you find them in the Moslem harem? Suppose I took that back, and said there are no evils working in these countries that are not working at home; suppose I concede that the temptations they have in common with ours are with them no more severe—I could not conscientiously say that, but suppose I did say it—I will stake my whole argument on this statement, that the men and women of China, Japan, Korea, Siam, India and Turkey, and of all Africa, have not the power of resistance that we have in a country like this, as a result of our Christian heredity and comparatively Christian environment, and the dominance of Christian ideals and institutions. It makes all the difference in the world, it is the difference between possible victory and absolutely certain defeat. Do you wonder that that cry was so insistent that it beat its way into the very cellular structure of the brain, and at times vibrated in the watches of the night?



## THE CRY OF DESPAIR.

Then I heard the cry of hopelessness and despair among the followers of the non-Christian religions. And I have no narrow view with reference to these non-Christian religions; I studied them patiently as an undergraduate; I attended the Parliament of Religions; I count among my friends followers of all of them; I am not unfamiliar with their sacred writings and the influence the religions have had wherever they have been established; I don't forget the word of Christ, that "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" yet I must say in simple accuracy, in the light of my studies of the working of these religions, that the followers of them, without the help of the Living Christ, are literally without hope. I say it, not as a matter of personal opinion, but as a scientific statement in the sense that science seeks to take account of all the facts. I am not talking about the hereafter—I have my own views as to that—but of this present life. These people, I repeat, weighing my words, without the knowledge of the Living Christ are literally without hope in this present life.

I may go further, and say that every Hindu, and every Mohammedan, and every Buddhist, every Parsee, has the right to know about Jesus Christ, and His Mission to men; and on ordinary grounds of square dealing, still more on the grounds of the Golden Rule, it is sinful for us to assume that if Christ be necessary for us—and the man that doubts that needs to give more time to thinking—these other people can do without Him. Let us not forget the cry of despair. It summons us to a great expansion of vital Christianity.

## THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH.

Then I am glad to say on every one of these fields I heard the voice of triumph calling us to larger things—not to satisfaction, not to leaning upon our oars, but calls upon us to press for an unprecedented advance. Now in every great battle—for example, the Battle of Mukden, which had a frontage of about 70 miles, a section may feel itself hard pressed, as one of the regiments of the Japanese forces did; but those in charge of the Japanese side, in touch with the whole line by means of wireless telegraphy, and all the other signalling methods of the day, knew that taking the battle as a whole, victory was assured. Gentlemen, I come among you from touch with the whole world-battlefield, and while I must say that here and there there is a division which is being hard pressed—and it is not strange when we consider the under-manned staff—yet, taking the battle as a whole, beyond question victory is assured. Of this there is no question whatever.

You know Napoleon's striking axiom when he said that the time to bring up the cavalry was when the enemy's lines began to waver, to turn it into a rout. In many places, the enemy's lines, in our case, are not only wavering, but breaking. It is the time of all times for the Church to concentrate her forces upon these great sections of the battlefield. We can do more in the next ten years than we could do in the thirty years that follow them if we neglect to press our advantage during this next decade. I don't say that idly. I have pondered it much, and I would that some power, some superhuman power, might work into the absorbed lives of our present home-field, and lead men to realize this world-situation that we might adjust our plans to its indications, and do so in time.

## THE VOICE OF PATRIOTISM.

I was touched by your message to the King; my heart was deeply stirred as I sat beneath the dome of St. Paul's yesterday morning\*. One loves to see the purest patriotism blended with the purest devotion to God; and I hear voices of patriotism in every one of these non-Christian countries summoning us to a great world advance worthy of the character of God, worthy of the ambassadors of Christ, worthy of the Church purchased by His blood. Let us break away from our ignoble conceptions of the Kingdom. You say, Do I have to leave my country to hear the voice of patriotism? Indeed, no; but I sometimes think one hears the call of his country nowhere as he hears it when he leaves it, especially if he be among non-Christian races. I remind you that there is a great shrinkage of the world, that the world has been pulled right up together, the races interlocked in each other's presence; and I remind you that this twentieth century—which some of us had hoped would see the ushering in of a world-wide adoption of universal arbitration and universal peace—this twentieth century has already witnessed a recrudescence of racial prejudice, hatred, and bitterness, the like of which has never appeared in any preceding century—I make no exception. The reason is obvious; it is this shrinkage of the world, this intense competition, this mingling of the peoples, that has made the world a small place; and the most thoughtful statesmen are very solicitous about this very matter. The last time I had the privilege of a long conversation with Sir Edward Grey, I was interested to see that he, in common with the statesmen of other nations, was most vitally concerned with this ques-

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\*The Service of Thanksgiving after the return of the King and Queen from India

tion. Well he may be; well they may be. Now segregation is an idle dream. You cannot segregate any nation under Heaven in these days. Amalgamation is equally a most superficial dream, although I have found good Christians talking about it. Domination has been tried and failed, and always will fail. Mere education, as we are finding in Japan, simply sharpens the tools. No, believe me, Christianity holds the only solution, which is the changing of the disposition of men under the preaching of a doctrine of brotherhood, the application of the Golden Rule between nations as well as individuals, the emphasizing of the solidarity of the interests of the races. Christ alone teaches these things, and what is infinitely more important, He alone is able to make this change effective.

You may keep the Orientals out of certain parts of the British Empire, as we may out of the United States, but you cannot keep the aggressive young men of our race from going into those lands and receiving, as it were, the virus of the sins and the low ideals and practices of these peoples into their veins, to come back and release these deteriorating influences in our own life.

If I were not a Christian I would be a believer in Foreign Missions. It is the only thing that will make the home-country safe. I referred to those social problems—they are so acute, so grievous, that we cannot afford to lose any benefit that we can find in any quarter to help us to grapple with them. Jacob Riis of my own country said that every dollar given to Foreign Missions generates ten dollars of energy for dealing with tasks right down at our own doors. Only a Gospel which has shown itself able to deal with a world-situation can conquer the slum.

## THE VOICE OF URGENCY.

I heard also the voice of urgency. It does seem to me as if God has done a hundred years of work in the last five. I wish that more might see it. The logic of this is that we quicken our pace; no longer must we ask, Is the world ready? Is God ready? Is God moving? We must quicken our pace—this is an unprecedented time of urgency. So many nations are plastic now that will soon become set like plaster; shall they be set in the mould of paganism or in the mould of Christianity? Unless we identify ourselves with these growing national aspirations they will be swallowed up by secularism and anti-Christian forces, and will accentuate enormously the difficulty of the missionary task. Urgency, because of the rising spiritual tide. It is always wise to take advantage of a rising tide. We can sweep into victory; we cannot if we let the tide fail. Urgency, because of the corrupt influences of our so-called civilization which are eating like a gangrene into the less-organized races of the world, and even touching with their deadly power some of the strongest ones. We simply must undo with a Christian hand what we have done in the name of Christian nations, with non-Christian hands. Urgent, because the very life of the Home Church is at stake. Christianity is on its trial. I heard another Voice which, I hope, we have heard to-day. That Voice said, "Unto whomsoever much has been given of him shall much be required." Surely He has given much unto us in this Society and in this country.

## A CALL TO THE LAYMEN.

Relatively, the laymen have not had as large a part in the missionary aspirations of our Church as they should and must have, if we are to meet this situation. They are not manifesting their forces to the degree the situation calls for. It requires the business experience, the business judgment, the business habits, the business ability of the man occupied in great commercial, industrial, and professional enterprises. We must have the laymen, and if we are going to have an enlargement of the volume of voluntary service we must have these men to make this spirit contagious in the Church. We must have the laymen—if we are going to Christianize the impact of civilization on the non-Christian world. The ministers alone cannot do that—though I stand second to none here in my admiration of them—it must be men in the commercial and industrial worlds, in the army and navy, in the civil service, men who are cruising over the world, sending representatives over the world, and conducting enterprises that touch the ends of the world. They only can Christianize this impact. And then we must have the laymen for the influence they must have on what I may call the laymen of the non-Christian nations. Every non-Christian religion has laymen, also holy men; but every traveler and missionary here will agree with me that that word "holy" is, generally speaking, a misnomer, and the laymen of the non-Christian religions have come to associate it with a spurious sort of religion—the opposite of the word holy. Therefore, when the missionary comes, they say, "Here comes a professor, a man paid to practice religion." But when the representatives of the commercial power of the

West, with whom they associate other things, come among them commending in their dealings and example the teachings of Jesus Christ, it presents an irresistible argument.

God only can measure the power of one Christ-like life.

Let us forget our statistics, forget our strategy, and become occupied with the discovery of the hiding of our power and the releasing of that power within us and through us.